PS
3097
.V3
1880

The Vagabonds

Class PS 3097

Book .V3

PRESENTED BY 1880

Christmas. 1879. Wm Robinson.

THE VAGABONDS

By J. T. TROWBRIDGE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. O. C. DARLEY

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK
C. T. DILLINGHAM
1880

TS3097
.V3
1880

Gift
M. Hjumgstedt
9 D 05

THE VAGABONDS.

WE are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger 's my dog. — Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentlemen, — mind your eye!
Over the table, — look out for the lamp! —
The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we 've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And eat and drank — and starved — together.

We 've learned what comfort is, I tell you!
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there 's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This out-door business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir, — I never drink;
Roger and I are exceedingly moral, —
Are n't we, Roger? — See him wink! —
Well, something hot, then, — we won't quarrel.
He 's thirsty, too, — see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk?
He understands every word that 's said, —
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I 've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I 've not lost the respect
(Here 's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And this old coat, with its empty pockets,
And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He 'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There is n't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable thankless master!
No, Sir! — see him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!
That is, there 's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But no matter!

We 'll have some music, if you 're willing,
And Roger here (what a plague a cough is, Sir,)
Shall march a little —— Start, you villain!
Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel shakes,
When he stands up to hear his sentence.
Now tell us how many drams it takes
To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps, — that 's five; he 's mighty knowing!
The night 's before us, fill the glasses! —
Quick, Sir! I 'm ill, — my brain is going! —
Some brandy, — thank you, — there! — it passes!

Why not reform? That 's easily said;
But I 've gone through such wretched treatment,
Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
And scarce remembering what meat meant,
That my poor stomach 's past reform;
And there are times when, mad with thinking,
I 'd sell out heaven for something warm
To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think?
At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
A dear girl's love, — but I took to drink; —
The same old story; you know how it ends.
If you could have seen these classic features, —
You need n't laugh, Sir; they were not then
Such a burning libel on God's creatures:
I was one of your handsome men!

If you had seen HER, so fair and young,
Whose head was happy on this breast!
If you could have heard the songs I sung
When the wine went round, you would n't have guessed
That ever I, Sir, should be straying
From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
Ragged and penniless, and playing
To you to-night for a glass of grog!

She 's married since, — a parson's wife:
'T was better for her that we should part, —
Better the soberest, prosiest life
Than a blasted home and a broken heart.
I have seen her? Once: I was weak and spent
On the dusty road: a carriage stopped:
But little she dreamed, as on she went,
Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped!

You 've set me talking, Sir; I 'm sorry;
It makes me wild to think of the change;
What do you care for a beggar's story?
Is it amusing? you find it strange?
I had a mother so proud of me!
'T was well she died before —— Do you know
If the happy spirits in heaven can see
The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain; then Roger and I will start.

I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
Aching thing, in place of a heart?

He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,
No doubt, remembering things that were, —
A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I 'm better now; that glass was warming. —
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street. —
Not a very gay life to lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink; —
The sooner, the better for Roger and me!

DEC 8 1895

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 988 306 1